

I'm Known by How I've Grown, Part 5 - 1 Corinthians 3:16-18 – June 29th, 2014

- Today's teaching will be part five of a series I've titled, "I'm Known by How I've Grown."
- In this chapter the Apostle Paul bluntly rebukes the carnal Corinthian church for their spiritual immaturity with the hopes of correcting them.
- What's interesting about his approach is he speaks to their current condition of carnality then seeks to get them back on track to maturity.

1. I'm unable to eat the meat of solid doctrine (Verses 1-2)

- Here Paul addresses them as worldly not spiritual though brothers in Christ who are as infants that are still not ready for solid food but milk.

2. I'm riddled with jealousy and conflict (Verses 3-4)

- Paul says they're carnality is evidenced by jealousy and arguing about who follows Paul or Apollos, which is why they act like worldly men.

3. I'm growing worldly and bitter fruit (Verses 5-9)

- Paul uses the analogy of planting watering and growing to take himself and Apollos off their carnal pedestal hoping they bear spiritual fruit.

4. I'm building a fleshly foundation (Verses 10-15)

- Paul goes from the agricultural analogy of planting to the architectural analogy of building with sobering words about how we live our lives.

5. I'm destroying God's sacred temple (Verses 16-17)

(16) Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? (17) If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

- v16 Paul asks them by way of a rhetorical question, don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?
- v17 Paul then says if anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him by virtue of how God's temple is sacred, and we are that temple.
- It's important to note Paul is not referring to the temple using the usual word "hieron," in the original language of the Greek New Testament.

- The reason this is so important is because Paul instead uses the Greek word, "naos," which is the Holy of Holies in third part of the temple.
- The significance of this will be germane to our understanding of this text, such that the "naos" was where the Shekinah glory of God dwelt.
- This is why Paul speaks to them in the plural and not the singular when he says, "you yourselves are God's temple" making up the church.

Charles Spurgeon of this says, "The doctrine of the indwelling of the Spirit is very wonderful, and also very solemn. What condescension on His part to dwell in us! How reverently should we entertain such a guest!"

Ephesians 2:19-22 NKJV Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, (20) having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, (21) in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, (22) in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

- Here's where I'm going with this seemingly complicated explanation, Christians, in their carnality have the propensity to destroy a church.
- So serious is this possibility that it rises to the level of God warning those who would destroy His church, that He in turn will destroy them.
- In other words, if we in any way harm, damage, injure or destroy the church of Jesus Christ, we too will be the recipients of that same fate.
- If this sounds to you a little bit like the Lord is hyper-protective of His bride, it's probably because the Lord is hyper-protective of His bride.
- I'm not trying to be funny, rather, I'm hoping to be clear in my communiqué concerning how absolutely dangerous and perilous this can be.
- Namely, that of God dealing very decisively and severely with anyone who would dare to in any way diminish God's glory in God's church.
- I suppose the question every one of us should ask ourselves is, am I guilty of doing this and if so what are the ways in which I'm doing this?
- Thankfully, the seriousness of this not only warranted the warning about it, but it also warranted the specific ways that we are capable of it.
- Let me explain, in the remaining six verses of the chapter, the Apostle Paul lists no less than three specific ways we can destroy a church.

1st - I can destroy a church by being self-deceived (Verse 18)

(18) Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a "fool" so that he may become wise.

- v18 Paul says don't deceive yourselves. Anyone fancying themselves wise by the standards of this age needs to become a fool to be wise.
- So we don't get confused by Paul's paradoxical statement, let me hasten to say to be wise in ones own eyes is the height of self-deception.
- As such, until and unless one comes to this truth in spite of how foolish they may seem they can pose a danger and threat to God's church.
- More specifically, in their self-deceived folly, they see themselves as being wiser than God's people, and as being wiser than God Himself.
- I realize it's hard to imagine anyone can really believe they know more than God but the truth of the matter is self-deception is so powerful.
- It's important we keep this within the context of what the Apostle Paul is warning them about; simply put, self-deception brings destruction.

- The point of the passage is not just the destruction of a church but perhaps more importantly the destruction of those who destroy a church.
- While we will see this again next week, Lord willing, I think I would be grossly remiss were I not to explain what is meant by this destruction.
- At the risk of an oversimplification, it's not speaking of the damnation losing salvation for eternal life but likely our untimely death in this life.

Henry Morris - "This destruction must be physical death, not spiritual, for the apostle has just assured us that all in whom the Spirit dwells are eternally saved (1 Corinthians 3:15), also note 1 Corinthians 5:5."

- You'll forgive the abrupt closing of my sermon today, but suffice it to say, this alone should be enough to shake anyone of us to the core.
- By that I mean just the notion of God removing us by way of our untimely death should cause us to ask the Holy Spirit to search our hearts.
- This because, if I'm given over to self-deception, and as such am causing destruction, though I'm saved, God may remove me as a threat.